

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
November 18th, 2024

The **Meeting** was CALLED to ORDER by the Chairman at 9:04 AM. Directors P. DeBlock, J. Wright, P. Ruszkiewicz, B. Cheney, and G. Constable were present along with K. Sumner (SWCD), M. Held (SWCD), O. Velez-Juarbe (NRCS), and E. Schellenberg (CCE).

2024-11-1 DeBlock made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to approve the October's Board Minutes as written. All in favor.

ACTIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS – The District sent a 50% deposit to I&J Manufacturing, LLC for a 10 ½' narrow transport trailer roller crimper. Apart from that, there were no other actions to report.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Bank Statements
- Collateral Agreements
- Region 5 Monthly SWCDD Report from Ben Luskin
- Notice of Reduction in Coverage – Selective Insurance
 - Sumner noted that the coverage claim is primarily related to drones, or otherwise described as 'unmanned aircrafts. 'We are unsure at this point whether the coverage regards to the District's potential ownership of a drone or whether a staff member would be covered should a drone ever cause damage to the District's staff members.
- Invitation from CCE to attend their 109th Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner

FINANCIAL REPORTS

- Cheney inquired whether the District had received money from the County. Sumner informed him that we did, after a bit of back and forth and waiting. Cheney thanked Sumner for pursuing the matter with the County.
- Sumner noted on the receipts of the dedicated fund summary that a piece of information was truncated from the report. The missing information pertained to the leftover funds from the 2023 Local Cost Share Fund which was added to the 2024 Local Cost Share Fund.

Sumner reminded the Board that the 2024 Local Cost Share Fund includes the \$60,000 the Board allocated to it earlier this year.

2024-11-2 DeBlock made the Motion, Ruskiewicz seconded, to file October's Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.

BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL

- Sumner indicated an addition to the bills to be paid. Number thirteen, pending Board approval, is a reimbursement to Sunflower Valley Farm in the amount of \$184,000 for expenses associated with the Wallkill Floodplain Bench project .

2024-11-3 Ruskiewicz made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to pay the bills as presented. All in favor.

GRANT REPORT UPDATE – Sumner presented the Board with October's grant report and noted the addition of the Local Cost Share Funding cover crop payments. The numbers at the end of the table indicated that the District still had about a \$9,000 balance in what the Board allocated. Sumner continued that with more recent updates for expected cover crop, it looks like the District could go over by one or two thousand. The District is still close to what the Board allocated. Wright inquired as to the quality of the cover crop the District was witnessing. Sumner indicated that the early plantings look pretty good, but the later plantings are questionable with the lack of moisture.

Sumner reminded the Board that with the recent payouts from cover crop and previous payments on residue management from the CRF6 grant, there is still the potential that the District would have to pay back those amounts to the State. Sumner indicated that the District paid nearly \$60,000 out of the CRF6 funding to accommodate cover crop and crop residue reimbursement costs. In terms of sign-off, Sumner explained that Held has been working with a staff member of NRCS to complete the cover crop planning tools and other materials involved with getting an approval signature. There have been wrinkles in getting the necessary software to cooperate. Held mentioned her recent struggles with both the software and State staff. Velez-Juarbe inquired about the number of Rusle2 runs Held needed to complete. They discussed the issues Held was going through in getting the software and how they could potentially fix these issues after the meeting.

Sumner discussed that, in the future, the District will have to decide if they want to continue to seek State funding for soil health practices (such as cover crop, crop residue, and compost application), or fund them locally, as the time dedicated to providing the adequate paperwork to support the practice may be strenuous for this office's current staff and priorities.

Personally, Sumner felt that because cover crop is such a widely-accepted beneficial practice, there shouldn't be as arduous a process for getting it certified and funded. The paperwork involved in the certification process is heavily focused on calculating soil loss, but the specific amount of soil erosion doesn't factor into the amount that is cost-shared. Because of this, Sumner feels that the effort expended to collect this data is relatively overkill for the practice's intended purpose.

Velez-Juarbe indicated that the NRCS standard is quite extensive and there is a lot of information required in them. He mentioned creating templates to help Held get through the Rusle2 runs more efficiently. There was some discourse about whether or not past cover crop applications would

receive Job Approval sign-off or CCA sign-off, and Velez-Juarbe indicated that if there was sufficient paperwork presented by the District, then a signature could be obtained.

Sumner mentioned being in favor of allocating a particular budget of local funds to reimburse the soil health practices that require verification of a CCA, an entity which the District currently lacks and has been out-sourcing through NRCS or State office.

Held agreed to meet with Velez-Juarbe after the meeting to assist her with Rusle2 and other sign-off requirements.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

CCE: Sumner, Schellenberg, and Held had a meeting about the Cornell CIG grant with the grant's technical advisor, Elizabeth Marks. Schellenberg indicated a positive meeting until the end when he indicated that most of the farms in this grant were not in the Black Dirt region. The technical advisor on the grant would prefer to have more black dirt farm participation. Schellenberg recounted the lack of farm enthusiasm in participating with the no-till conversion program, in particular, the black dirt farm that had pulled out due to grant complications.

Schellenberg thought it was a little late for the grant to be revoked, so it may not matter how many farms participating are in the black dirt. Sumner explained that the grant's narrative is not to address oxidation or subsidence, and the technical advisor's expectations may be misinformed.

Schellenberg reminded the Board that they were invited to the annual dinner at the Grand Ski Lodge.

NRCS: Application deadline was Nov 1st. Velez-Juarbe reported that NRCS has about forty applications for this year for Orange County alone for the AMA program. He noted the increase in applications this year, as last year's application numbers were around thirty. The agency has finished accepting applications which are being evaluated for this year. Staff are working on expiring contracts that need to be addressed.

STAFF REPORTS

*Held, King, and Sumner emailed their written staff reports to the Board prior to the meeting for review.

E. King (SWCD): Unfortunately, King was not in attendance at this meeting as she was on her way to the Administrative Conference in Saratoga Springs.

M. Held (SWCD): Held requested board approval to attend Certified Crop Advisor, CCA, training which begins November 19th to November 20th to prepare for the CCA exam in February of 2025. Sumner indicated that there would be minimal cost not exceeding \$500 to the District to send her to training.

2024-11-4 Constable made the motion, DeBlock seconded, to pay for the District Technician to attend CCA training in Syracuse November 19th – 20th. All in Favor.

- **Equipment:** Held reminded the Board of the new equipment that the District is expecting. She spoke of the 50% deposit for the roller crimper through the CRF6 grant and reminded

the Board of how the funding from Senator Skoufis' office and the CIG grant are hoping to be spent.

- Roller Crimper: Held updated the Board on the farmers who had made updates on cover crop plantings. Currently, she has confirmation that everyone has planted and is waiting to see appropriate growth on some of the fields.
- Boom Mower: Held re-stated that the mower has the potential to be rented out, as it works, but conversation with those who were interested in renting it has still left much to be desired.
- Cover Crop Program: Held reported that she'd been working largely on the planted cover crop documentation since the last board meeting, which included going out to spot-check fields and filling out the AEM Tier 3A Cover Crop Planning Tools. She presented an updated chart of farmers who had planted, how much funding had been allocated, and how much was projected to yet be administered.
- Climate Resilient Farming:
 - Round 6: Held updated the Board on Jason Touw's planting. She is waiting to see better growth before administering full payment of his cover crop, but provided a partial payment for the crop already administered. She also mentioned that Phil Johnson had come into the office to inform the office that he had planted.
- Ag Non-Point Source: Held indicated she now had all the closeout materials for the Greystone Stables' project in Round 29.
- Agriculture Environmental Management: Held had a meeting with Jessy Raap and Patty Larkin of Agricultural Consulting Services, ACS, to kickstart the creation of the Certified Nutrient Management Plan, CNMP, Raap needs for his desired Bedded Pack Barn project. She projected that the CNMP (which the District will be assisting in paying for) would be finished around this time next year. Once that plan is created, the District would then seek funding for the project through an Ag Non-Point Source Grant or Climate Resilient Farming round.
- Pollinator Project: Held cautioned about allocating money for a new project due to the potential of having to pay back money to the State if cover crop sign-offs aren't obtained for the CRF Round 6 grant round. She indicated that she would like to speak with Kevin about the logistics of the plan more and gather a narrative of background information. She estimated that a pool funding of between \$10,000 - \$13,000 would be more than sufficient for the demonstration of five pollinator projects.
 - Cheney asked who the intended audience of the pollinator garden project was for. Held indicated that she'd hoped for the project to reach homeowners in addition to farmers. Cheney recommended reaching out to municipalities such as town parks that have pollinator gardens, as they already have contacts and can outsource more funding than private landowners. DeBlock recommended reaching out to master gardeners to see if any of them had already been called to help with pollinator gardens or could offer any assistance.
 - Sumner asked if we should offer cost-funding to any municipalities who get involved in the program. Cheney said yes, however, indicated that the District's main objective should be to progress agriculture in the Orange County area. Held and Schellenberg assured the Board that a pollinator project would be a worthwhile

- endeavor, as supporting native species that are far more efficient at pollinating would be a means of supporting farm crops, particularly vegetables and fruits.
- It was further emphasized how important the District's outreach to the general public is. This would be a project that not only broadcasts the District to the public, but provides them with a means to support local farmers if they reside within the surrounding area of a farm.
 - As more of a means of conservation effort, Held suggested having an emphasis on restoring the native Hudson Valley pollinator species, as those pollinators have been in decline for quite a few years. She recommended requiring Hudson Valley native species in the cost-sharing requirements.

K. Sumner (SWCD):

- **Wallkill Flood Projects:** Sumner reported that he is still working with the attorney on moving the title work along for the easements. He indicated that if the landowner's attorney did not respond to the District, then the District would be inclined to proceed with the easement without having Farm Credit release the area that is being requested. He indicated that there was a minimal risk, but the only issue would be if Pine Island Turf reneged on their mortgage and lost the property. Then, the new property owner wouldn't be subject to the easement. It is unlikely that a new homeowner would fill the floodplain bench back in. Much of the floodplain area is already within the DEC's flood control easement.
 - Sumner indicated that construction on the north side is going very well. They started on the last of four areas with the excavation. Three quarters of the bench is entirely excavated and seeded with trees planted.
 - The payment discussed in the Bills to be Paid is all contract work. There are some extras, such as fill in the adjacent fields, which will be billed more. There's been more excavation required due to the sand and clay layers going up and down unpredictably. There have been areas where over-excavation was necessary to put good soil back into the bench. Sumner warned the Board that the District will have to front significant extra costs on that, but not costs that were unexpected. These items were left out of the contract because it was easier for the District to get more 'apples to apples' bids on the base work. It was uncertain as to where that number was going to land. Next month, Sumner will probably be asking to allocate more funds to that Phase 4 north contract.
- **Celery Ledge:** Sumner had no updates to report on the status of the permits for the Celery Avenue Ledge Lowering Project. He suspects that DEC will want the District to satisfy the town's local floodplain development requirements before they'll issue permits. Sumner has been working with our engineer, Wendell Buckman, on submitting floodplain development applications to both the Town of Goshen and Wawayanda. The previous lack of support from the Town of Goshen did not deter the District from moving forward in the past, but he does not suspect similar opposition from the Town under its current administration.
- **Climate Resilient Farming Round 7:** The District has received contracts for the three CRF Round 7 projects. Within the grant, there are three irrigation projects. He indicated that the District would be letting Shuback Farms know that they are in the clear to purchase their

boom irrigation equipment. The District can replenish the general fund with the money already paid out to Crist Bros Orchard.

- **Wallkill Maintenance Revision:** Cheney spoke to Mr. Mahoney of the County Law Department on Thursday and again on Friday. Mr. Mahoney is committed to having the [Wallkill Maintenance] document revised and given back to the Legislative Clerk. Cheney expects that the revision will come before Physical Services a week from today and requested Sumner's attendance. It would then be approved there and be on the floor of the legislature on the first Thursday of December. It should be in place with everybody's signature before the end of the year. So, the money that comes in 2025, \$60,000, will remain in the program. Then it'll go through a series of signatures that Cheney will shepherd through in a couple of days.
 - Sumner indicated that the District did not spend a lot of the Wallkill Maintenance money this year and hopes to get the river contractor on the site for more work in December. He reminded the board that it would be beneficial if the District could receive the full \$60,000.
 - Sumner reminded the board that the flood control projects are usually inspected at least once a year. At times, they would be inspected twice a year. Ever since COVID, it's been very inconsistent, so he decided to just do a comprehensive inspection of the project himself. He inspected the river from Oil City Road to Maple Avenue, as well as the Pochuck River up a little bit beyond Glenwood avenue. He curated a comprehensive list of maintenance sites to turn the contractor loose on. This was provided to the maintenance agreement partners and to the DEC. He suspects that the DEC is willing to forego the formal inspect and replace it with Sumner's in-depth inspection.
- **Ag Non-Point Source:** Sumner met with the executive director of Winslow Therapeutic and their contractor to plan out of the additional work that the District will assist with. The project is scheduled for Ag Non-Point Source Round 27. In addition to this project, there are others within the grant round that have had no activity. He advised the Board that sometime between now and March, the District will probably put in a request for a time extension on this grant round.
- **Gas purchase from Wawayanda:** The District received an email from the town indicating that all they needed was an insurance certificate. The District immediately sent that out late last week.
- **O'Dell PDR Project:** Sumner wanted to make sure the Board understood and held no reservations with him assisting the O'Dell Family Dairy in putting their farm in ag protection.
 - Last month, Sumner indicated that it would be beneficial if the Ag Board knew which farms were interested in pursuing PDR so they could offer assistance. Sumner and Cheney approached Alan Sorensen with the idea that farms interested in PDR that were important to the area but did not check all of Land Trust's boxes could benefit from an alternative plan for application, preparation, and funding. Alan Sorensen thought this idea was very feasible.
 - The County Planning Department (Alan Sorensen's department) is not tied to just using the county money to match the PDR projects. When presented with the idea of a project to be matched by the county with the towns, they

considered that to be workable. There needs to be 50% alternative funding in order for the county to cost-share. Sumner sent a map of the potential cluster of properties in the southwest part of the county interested in PDR application to the County Planning Department. Sorensen said he'd have one of his planners work on it.

- Sumner assisted the O'Dells in writing a letter to the three towns in which his property resides. There's been no feedback about this yet. Sumner indicated that it would be helpful to know the per acre payment of the last few PDR projects, as this is the first question that is typically asked by the towns who are asked to contribute.
- The Board held no reservations for Sumner's continuance of helping the O'Dells in their pursuit of a PDR.
- **Senator Skoufis Funding:** The money from the office of Senator Skoufis will be coming through New York State Ag and Markets. The District still lacks any in-writing condition of the money to be administered for the new pieces of equipment.
- **Tire Removal:** O'Dell requested funding assistance with tire removal. O'Dell found a place that would take tires at \$2 a piece even with rims. Sumner requested that O'Dell collect a receipt and give it to the District as soon as the work was finished.
 - The question of what was done with recycled tires was posed by Schellenberg. Sumner indicated that he learned from a county recycling coordinator that many old tires end up being burned.
 - When the District worked on this before, Sumner noticed that most tires were getting used in asphalt in other states. The Board agreed to check out the number and amount of the invoice for the O'Dell tire removal before agreeing to fund any part of it.
- **Wallkill Wildlife Refuge Collab:** Some time ago, Sumner had asked Congressman Pat Ryan's predecessor to schedule a meeting with the Wallkill Wildlife Refuge. Unfortunately, this meeting never happened. Recently, he got a call back from the Wildlife Refuge, and it seems like the correspondence now is timely. Sumner scheduled a meeting with the Wildlife Refuge and the Federal DOT. He informed the Board that five million dollars intended to be used for the Wallkill's remediation is still floating around. As far as Sumner knew, the Federal DOT was still trying to come up with a plan for the money. He believed that if the District could have some influence on how that money was dedicated, it could be used to serve the Wallkill Wildlife Refuge and the District's mission.
- **Funds:** Sumner indicated that considering how the grants are always a moving target, a lot of the District's discretionary funding is coming from the Part C pool. With that funding being our main source of local match into our grants to get them to increase their ranking, the District needs to use caution on how much we allocate to our grant match. We don't want to overextend these match commitments, as we have significant easement costs coming up at some point as well as other costs we may or may not incur.
 - **Sumner summarized the Part C allocation in a chart as follows:**
 - Part C Balance from 2024: \$180,000
 - Part C addition in 2025: \$210,000
 - Which puts the Part C Balance at just under \$400,000.
 - Sumner anticipated the following costs to come out of the Part C Funding:

- Grant Match: \$75,000
 - Cover Crop Contingency: \$60,000
 - Easement Obligations
 - Pine Island Turf: \$42,000
 - Bastek: \$75,000
 - Additions to Phase 4 North: \$100,000
- Which totals the District's anticipated costs to around \$350,000. He cautioned the Board about committing any of this funding to other projects before seeing how these potential costs play out. He informed the Board that he would be tracking these obligations on a monthly basis, and the District would be making no further draws from the Part C funds. He mentioned that there was potential for the Cover Crop obligation to be reduced pending Held's ability to satisfy the State's sign-off requirements.
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- **Budget:** Cheney informed the Board that the County Legislature had passed the District's budget.
- **Sexual harassment training:** Sumner informed the Board that it is still waiting for Wright, King, and Held to complete sexual harassment prevention training.
 - Performance Measures Report: Sumner reminded the Board that the District's Performance Measures Report requires that each Director completes one item from their individual training plan. Sexual harassment prevention training is an annual requirement that will satisfy the one training plan item.
- **Ag Board Meeting Minutes:** Sumner and the Board discussed the letter presented to the Ag Board by Orion Blake on water table management and oxidation in the Black Dirt region.

Next meeting date: December 16th

2024-11-5 Cheney made the motion, seconded by Wright, to adjourn the meeting at 11:23 AM. All in favor.

Minutes Prepared By:

Mary Held, District Field Technician

Report to Board KMS

November, 2024

Walkkill Flood Projects –

No updates on the title work for Phase 4 Bench easements from last month

Floodplain Bench Phase 4 North

The contractor pulled out for another job at the end of October, but has returned to our project. Tree planting is planned for this week along with continued excavation of area 4. We are still expecting to complete all the work this year. Some work not included in the original contract was done which I will describe at the meeting.

Other Flood Control Items

Celery Avenue ledge lowering project – No word on DEC/ACoE permits. I am working on Floodplain Development Permit applications for Goshen and Wawayanda.

Carbon Farming Project – Still waiting on final payment of \$4,268.32 on Southway project (same status as last month).

AEM Round 18 –Ewanciw project is continuing to move towards completion. There has been no activity on the other Tier 4 projects. We sent reminder letters with a proposed latest date to date show progress so we have an opportunity to switch projects if necessary before the contract ends on 12/31/2025.

CRF Round 7 – Contract documents were finally received last week. They were signed and returned same day, now waiting for go-ahead to request funding advance/reimbursements.

‘Sign Offs’ on Soil Health Practices –We are still working on determining if it will be workable to have NYSSWCC or NRCS staff sign off on our projects (same status as last month). I have been reminding the Board of the potential need for us to cover expenses going back to 2022. I will discuss further at Board meeting.

Revision of Walkkill Maintenance Agreement – Awaiting direction from County on next steps (same status as last month).

I completed a comprehensive field inspection of the Federal Flood Control Project area and provided it to Maintenance Agreement partners. We expect contractor to begin work in December.

Roller Crimper Project Update -10 foot roller crimper has been ordered.

The AgNPS Round 29 – No recent project activity.

The AgNPS Round 27 - Met with Winslow ED to discuss additional project work. I decided we should request a time extension on rd 27 mainly to give more time to complete work at Winslow. There are several

other projects in rd 27 that have not been completed. We will have to decide if we want to include them in the time extension request.

Other Items for Discussion

Gas Purchase From Wawayanda – No updates from last month.

O'Dell PDR – I helped the O'Dells compose a letter to the three towns their property is in, requesting their consideration of providing local match funding for the project. No feedback has been received yet. Barry and I met briefly with Aan Sorenson to broach the possibility of a County-town cost share approach to this project and he believed it was feasible. I provided a map of potential farms in southwest Orange County that could compose a 'farmland block'. He is having one of his planners enhance the map.

Skoufis Equipment Funding – no formal agreement in place yet. We are told it will be coming through NYSA&M. (Same status as last month.)

Our 2025 budget was passed by County Legislature/Physical Services Committee on 10/28.

Possible Collaboration with Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge – I finally was able to reach someone at USFWS to renew discussion about a floodplain benching project at their Wallkill River refuge. It appears that the \$5 million allocated by USDOT is still available, and their sheet piling approach is still on the table. I am supposed to have a call with USFWS and USDOT next week.

Tires – The O'Dell farm has inquired if there is still assistance for tire removal from farms.

End-of-Year Dedicated Funds Adjustments – I will be making some suggestions to the Board to move some funds from the Unobligated category to several of our dedicated funds. I will also be requesting allocating additional funds to the Wallkill Floodplain Bench Phase 4 North project.

Emily King

Secretary to the Board Update

11/18/24

Following October's meeting, I emailed the District's 2024 Part B & Annual Plan of Work to Ben Luskin with the State Committee who confirmed that he received it. I created a new page on the District's website to showcase Sumner's inspection report of the Walkkill Federal Flood Control Project.

I mailed a check in the amount of \$8,437.50 to I&J Manufacturing on 11/4/24 to secure a deposit on the 10 & ½ narrow transport trailed roller crimper. This action was approved by Sumner and the check was signed by DeBlock. I&J Manufacturing deposited the check on 11/12 & Held reached out to confirm their next steps. An employee of I&J Manufacturing provided the District with an updated invoice and noted that we should expect the roller to be ready around 12/20/25. The employee specified that the District needs to pay the remaining balance prior to shipping the roller.

I monitored the District's online bank accounts and recorded when the District received online deposits. These include funds from the Orange County DPW, which was reimbursement for the Walkkill Maintenance project, as well as the 4th Quarter County Appropriation, and the money from Resolution No. 168. The District also received the 90% Advance BMP for the AEM Round 18 projects.

Furthermore, I updated the physical BOD meeting binder and updated the motions that the Board passed in 2024. Since the District received funds for new grants, I added new activity codes to the 2024 time log.

I worked on creating a brochure for the District to satisfy the terms of the Part C Performance Measures final report. I corresponded with fellow office managers to ask for their advice on creating a brochure for their District. I provided Sumner with the prices of print orders that Canva offers. Free delivery is offered for all the orders listed below. Canva does not offer a free sample print of your design. Held informed Sumner and I that you can download the brochure from Canva and print copies at Staples.

- 100 trifolds with a matte finish (free) = \$86 & if we wanted to include envelopes in the order it would be an additional \$8 → \$94
- 50 trifolds with a matte finish (free) = \$54 & an additional \$4.50 for envelopes → \$58.50
- 25 trifolds with a matte finish (free) = \$39.25 & an additional \$2.25 for envelopes → \$41.50
- 10 trifolds with a matte finish (free) = \$22.50 & an additional \$1 for envelopes → \$23.50
- 1 trifold with a matte finish (free) = \$9.75 & an additional \$0.20 for an envelope → \$9.95

Additionally, I worked on the fall newsletter for the District. Sumner and Held provided the subject matter for the newsletter and I oversaw editing and formatting. In order to provide a detailed update, the District decided to classify the newsletter instead as the District's Annual Report. I provided both the annual report and brochure to Sumner for reviewal.

I assisted Sumner in compiling and emailing the notarized contract agreements to members of the State Committee. The agreements pertain to projects involved with the Climate Resilient Farming Round 7 grant. As a reminder, the three projects comprise of Wright Family Farms, Shuback Sod Farm, and Crist Bros. Orchards. I included copies of the District's disability insurance certificate and workers compensation insurance certificate in the mailing. I saved a copy of the email from Ben Luskin to the Share Drive, which confirmed that he received the three requested notarized contract agreements, etc.

I prepared and mailed letters via USPS to the AEM RD 18 Tier 4 project applicants. The recipients include Joe Minkus, Steven Demberg, Rick Minkus, and Devon Simpson. These letters reminded the applicants that the funding allocated for their project will no longer be available after 12/31/2025. I included a copy of their signed contract, which included their project budget information with the mailing. Sumner approved and signed the letters and their accompanying documents.

Finally, I updated the various grant ledgers, as well as the receipts, disbursements, and payroll Excel spreadsheet. I updated the online bank accounts to reflect the total listed on October's. I provided a detailed report of the dedicated fund summary for October's financial report. I updated the 2024 District's Local Cost-Share Program Excel spreadsheet after the payments the District issued in October.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Emily

OCSWCD Technician Update
Mary C. Held

11/15/2024

I'd like to ask for a motion of approval to send me to CCA training. Training is from November 19-20th.

I am scheduled to take the civil service exam December 7th.

Equipment:

New Equipment:

The purchase of a 10.5' roller crimper with a swinge hitch from I&J was approved by the board at the last meeting. The SWCD has made its first deposit of 50% of the total cost (\$16,000)/2 = \$8,000). This purchase is being made through the CRF6 grant.

The only update on the additional equipment we are supposed to purchase is that we had a meeting with Erik and other Cornell assistance staff about the CIG grant. From my previous board report, here is how we are expecting/hoping to spend the funding from Senator Skoufis' office and the CIG Grant from Cornell:

The Skoufis money allocated for two new corn planters and a seeder. However, since we also have the CIG grant with Cornell, we are hoping to purchase two new seeders – an additional 7' seeder with a native grasses box and a new 12' Esch seeder. We'd hope to purchase another 4-row no-till corn planter in addition.

The CIG grant is allocating funding for a John Deere 1755 no-till corn planter with 4 30-inch rows (\$52,469) [United Ag & Turf] and an I&J Manufacturing 30' folding roller crimper (\$34,000) [Hoorman Soil Health Services].

This would leave us with four corn planters. When we receive these pieces of equipment, we would consider selling the 2006 Great Plains Seeder and the 2005 John Deere Corn Planter.

The question of where we'd put it is still up in the air. As I mentioned in the previous board report, Ron O'Dell is uninterested in putting up another building on his property. We are still considering the opportunity to keep equipment with Cornell at the 4-H park depending on space availability.

Rentals: Rentals this season: 16 rentals

Total acres per seeder

ESCH: 238.2ac

2022 Great Plains: 3.5ac

2006 Great Plains: 61.7ac

Mower: No updates.

Roller Crimper Project:

Cover crop is being planted in preparation for spring crimping.

Rowe, Chuck: Cover crop planted, rye and oats. No crimper fields ID'd.

Ronne, Alex:

Crimper Acres:

Farm 1433, Tract 791 Fields 15 (half = 9.2 ac) and 3 (5.63 ac)

Conklin, Sue: Cover crop just planted. No Crimper fields ID'd.

Touw, Jason: Cover Crop Planted. See CRF6 update.

Crimper Acres: Farm 1360, Tract 7407 Field 45 (4 acres)

Johnson, Phil: Has not planted cover crop yet. No fields ID'd for crimping yet

O'Dell, Mike:

Crimper acres:

Kurpick Rd, Fields 1 (4.93ac) and 2 (5.27ac)

Farm 2512 Tract 8633 Fields 2 (3.05) and 3 (3.88)

Farm 1821 Tract 277 Fields 2 (2.12), 14 (3.64), 15 (5.54), 16 (2.85), and 17 (0.75)

Wallkill River Phase 4 North:

No updates.

Local Cost Share Program:

Since the last board meeting, I have been largely working to fill out job sheets and check on the status of cover crop applications. It's taken some time, since a decent amount of acreage has been planted this season. We are still receiving cover crop application requests for funding. At the moment, the current allocation and expected payments look like they will be exceeding the LCSP budget by a couple thousand. Please note that Chuck Rowe still has considerable acreage to potentially be paid. Please also note that we are requesting that cover crop planted by Tom Minkus is funded from the LCSP budget.

<i>single species</i>	<i>projected</i>	<i>planted</i>	<i>paid</i>	<i>note</i>	<i>Checked?</i>
Tom Owens	300	175	175	Paid	Checked, photos in file
Mark Hoyt	175	16	16	Paid	checked, photos in file
Mike O'Dell	150	73.79	73.79	Paid	Checked, photos in file
Chuck Rowe	175	154.4	29.28	paid for 29.28 acres	preliminary check for paid acreage, additional acreage will be paid when late planting makes more progress
Brad Meres	30	7	0	Planted Nov 3rd	not checked, not paid

Jessy Raap	15	15	0	late planting	not checked, not paid
Sue Conklin	15	15	0	late planting	not checked, not paid
Troy Vellenga	17.8	17.7	17.7	paid	Checked, photos in file
Tom Minkus	0	178.7	178.7	to be paid	checked, photos in file
John King		0.5	0.5	paid	checked, photos in file
R&G Produce	0	174.66	174.66	paid	checked, photos in file
Total:	877.8	827.75	665.63		

\$ x \$70.00 x \$70.00 x \$70.00
 = = =
 \$61,446.00 \$57,942.50 \$46,594.10

Total paid
 including m/s
 (below) and
 Tom Minkus: \$52,942.75

<i>Multi species</i>	<i>projected</i>	<i>planted</i>	<i>Paid</i>	<i>Notes</i>
John King	3	3.13	Paid	checked, photos in file
Alex Ronnee	75	71.56	Paid	checked, photos in file
Total:	78	74.69		

 x \$85.00
 = \$6,348.65

CRF Update:

Round 6:

I have been working with Matt with NRCS on installing RUSLE2 software and running it for our CRF6 farms. We're running into a couple of problems which I directed to Greg Albrecht, who directed me to Brendan Jordan. I'm in communication with him to figure out what's going on.

Cover Crop OCTOBER PAYMENTS:

Russell Smiley:

11.61 single species
 10.51 multispecies
 22.12 acres total
Total: \$1,706.05

Alex Kocot:

96.01 single species
 43.77 multispecies

139.78 acres total
Total: \$10,441.15

Bob Stap:
16.47 single species
Total: \$1,152.90

NOVEMBER PAYMENTS (update):

Jason Touw:
41.63 single species – only 23.31 acres planted before plant-by date (see BMP payment)
1.95 multi species – late and partially NRCS payout, not included in BMP payment
43.58 total acres
Total: \$3,079.85
Total This Payment: 23.31 acres x \$70/ac = \$1,701.70

Phil Johnson: Has not planted yet

Total CRF6 Cover Crop reimbursements this month: \$1,701.70

Round 7: Received Round 7 contracts from the state. Awaiting approval from the state.

Round 8: No updates.

AGNPS Update:

Round 27: Contract End Date: March 2025

- Troy Vellenga: reached out to ask if he was planning on carrying out his projects. Still waiting to hear from him.
 - o Access Control System:
 - State: \$15,166
 - SWCD: \$3500
 - LO: \$4,667
 - Total: \$23,333
 - o Silage Leachate Control and Treatment System:
 - State: \$26,541
 - SWCD: \$6,125
 - LO: \$8,167
 - Total: \$40,833

Round 29:

- Greystone Stables: As of Friday, we have all of the closeout materials for the Greystone Stables project.

Round 30:

- No technician updates.

AEM Update:

Round 18: No updates from the technician

CNMP Update for Jessy Raap:

The first meeting scheduled with Jessy Raap and Ag Consulting Services was Nov 7th at 11am. The process of creating his Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan is now underway. I will be working with Kevin and Emily and potentially NRCS staff to complete soil testing of the remaining ~20 fields that have yet to be sampled.

Pollinator Project:

I've been researching implementation methods in my spare time and considering the different approaches a farm or homeowner could take in creating a pollinator garden. No pollinator garden or converted meadow is the same, and construction is never a 'one size fits all' scenario. I would like to make the pollinator project with SWCD suitable for various-sized plots with a minimum sizing of 100 sq feet plot.

The goal of the pollinator project would be to inform the public of the climactic benefits of pollinator gardens on our ecosystems and soil quality. The demo will help the SWCD understand the difficulties of creating pollinator habitats compared to the benefits and furthermore show us the complications both homeowners and farms face during habitat construction.

There are many parts of the project to consider. Because so many other groups have demonstrated successful public involvement in creating pollinator habitats, there are a few examples to go off of in creating our own. The NRCS standard is less of an incentive than I agree with, but I'm also not inclined to give 'up front' money to individuals or cover the entire cost of the project. I think finding a happy medium in terms of reimbursement is up for discussion. I think I would handle the budget similar to how we handle our AEM budget, with a set amount divvied up between the farms or homeowners who have agreed to participate based on the size and intensity of their projects. At the moment, I'm considering \$10,000 - \$13,000 for 5 pollinator gardens.

I am in communication with a master gardener about potential involvement in helping to create pollinator plans for implementation. I would also like to come up with a list of local landscapers who could be called upon for the 'construction' work of the pollinator gardens. As a reimbursement process, it would be up to the landowner to hire a landscaper or prepare the site themselves. SWCD would then potentially reimburse the labor up to a certain amount based on the project plans. SWCD could also potentially reimburse a cost-share amount for the seed, live plantings, and/or other costs associated with preparing the seed bed.

With this and more in mind, the base program for the pollinator project is underway. I would like to meet with Kevin a couple more times to determine the feasibility of what I am suggesting before I present it to the board for thoughts and considerations in December. I would also like to meet with farms who have planted general flower fields from seed to see what methods have

worked best. If anyone here would like to discuss ideas after the meeting, I would be more than happy to discuss and add insight to the pollinator project plans.